

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO DEA HQS WASHDC IMMEDIATE
USICA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9270

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USICA

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DEA FOR BENSINGER/ENOA

EO 11652: NA
SUBJ: BENSINGER RADIO INTERVIEW

1. THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE APPEARED IN BOGOTA NEWSPAPER EL TIEMPO
ON AUGUST 1. TITLE: THE GUAJIRA; CONTRARY CRITERIA REGARDING
MILITARIZATION. THE ARTICLE STATES:

2. THE SUGGESTION BY PETER BENSINGER, CHIEF OF THE OFFICE OF
NARCOTICS OF THE UNITED STATES, TO THE EFFECT THAT COLOMBIA TAKE
THE COURSE OF ACTION OF MILITARIZING THE GUAJIRA IN ITS FIGHT
AGAINST MARIHUANA CAUSED NOTORIOUS INTEREST YESTERDAY IN OFFICIAL
AND PRIVATE MEDIA.

3. THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF THE DAS, GUILLERMO LEON LINARES,
CLASSIFIED THE INSINUATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN OFFICIAL TO
MILITARIZE THE GUAJIRA AS QTE IRRESPECTFUL UNQTE.

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4. LEON LINARES EXPRESSED: QTE WHATEVER THE ARMED FORCES MUST
DO IN ANY SITUATION DEPENDS ONLY UPON THE SOVEREIGN DECISION OF
THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC AND THE HIGH MILITARY COMMAND. NO
OFFICIAL OR REPRESENTATIVE OF ANY FOREIGN COUNTRY IS PERMITTED
TO INTERVENE IN THESE OR OTHER MATTERS WHICH PERTAIN EXCLUSIVELY
TO COLOMBIAN AUTHORITIES UNQTE.

5. THE CHIEF OF THE DAS ADDED: QTE EVEN THOUGH THE COLOMBIAN AUTHORITIES HAVE MADE EXTRAORDINARY EFFORTS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THE TRAFFIC OF NARCOTICS THAT AFFECTS THE NORTH AMERICAN PEOPLE, AND WE HAVE COORDINATED THAT FIGHT WITH THE AUTHORITIES OF THAT COUNTRY, IT DOES NOT ALLOW REPRESENTATIVES OF THAT NATION OR ANY OTHER NATION TO TELL US WHAT WE MUST DO. UNQTE

6. THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE, CESAR GOMEZ ESTRADA, ASSERTED THAT THE DECISION CORRESPONDS TO THE HIGH MILITARY COMMANDS AND THAT HE WAS PLEASED THAT NOW THE UNITED STATES IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CULTIVATIONS, BECAUSE A YEAR AGO, WHEN COOPERATION WAS REQUESTED IN ORDER TO DESTROY THE ENORMOUS CULTIVATIONS DISCOVERED ON THE RIDGES OF THE SIERRA NEVADA, A SATISFACTORY RESPONSE WAS NOT RECEIVED.

7. GENERAL LUIS CARLOS CAMACHO LEYVA, COMMANDER GENERAL OF THE MILITARY FORCES, ABSTAINED FROM COMMENT, AND STATED HE WAS UNAWARE OF THE EXISTENCE OF ANY OFFICIAL PROPOSAL ON THE PART OF THE UNITED STATES.

8. THE PARLIAMENTARIAN ABELARDO FORERO BENAVIDES WAS EMPHATIC IN CONFIRMING TO EL TIEMPO THAT IT IS NECESSARY TO MILITARIZE THE GUAJIRA, BUT ALSO THE UNITED STATES MUST BE REQUESTED TO DO THE SAME IN ALL OF FLORIDA AND ITS COASTS.

9. BENSINGER WAS NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE GUAJIRA, WHICH IS THE UNCLASSIFIED

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CHIEF SUPPLIER OF MARIHUANA FOR U.S. MARKETS, BUT AFTER RETURNING FROM A DRUG CONFERENCE IN LIMA LAST WEEK, HE CAME TO COLOMBIA AND, ACCOMPANIED BY COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, TRAVELLED TO THE PENNINSULA.

10. LATER, HE DECLARED THAT QTE IN THE GUAJIRA PENNINSULA I WAS SURPRISED BY THE ROUTINE AND ALMOST NORMAL FLOW OF DRUG TRAFFICKING THAT IS QUITE EVIDENT UNQTE.

11. HE LATER ASSERTED THAT QTE MILITARY PRESENCE IS NECESSARY IN THE GUAJIRA; ROADS SHOULD BE BLOCKED IN ORDER TO INTERCEPT THE TRUCKS WHICH TRANSPORT LARGE QUNATITIES OF DRUGS TO THE AIR STRIPS, AND THE STRIPS THEMSELVES, WHICH ARE QUITE VISIBLE AND EASILY ACCESSIBLE; IT IS NECESSARY TO STATION MILITARY PERSONNEL DAY AND NIGHT.

12. IN COLOMBIA, THE DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR JUDICIAL POLICE, RODOLFO GARCIA ORDONEZ, WHO HEADS THE FIGHT AGAINST DRUG TRAFFICKERS, STATED THAT HE WAS NOT FAMILIAR SPECIFICALLY WITH THE PROPOSAL OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEA, BUT THAT DURING THE MIDDLE OF LAST YEAR, IN A REPORT TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL JAIME SERRANO RUEDA, THE NECESSITY OF MILITARIZING THE GUAJIRA IN THE FIGHT AGAINST MARIHUANA

WAS

INDICATED, AND THAT SAME CONCERN WAS MADE KNOWN TO PRESIDENT LOPEZ MICHELSEN'S PUBLIC MINISTER. POSSIBLY, HE CONCLUDED, WITH KNOWLEDGE OF THIS, THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEA HAD LAUNCHED THE INITIATIVE IN QUESTION.

13. SUB-TITLE: THE MINISTER SPEAKS. THE MILITARIZATION OF THE GUAJIRA IS NOT AN OFFICIAL PROPOSAL BUT RATHER A CONCERN OF MR. BENSINGER, SAID YESTERDAY THE MINISTER OF JUSTIC CESAR GOMEZ ESTRADA.

14. THE INITIATIVE, IF CONSIDERED, COULD BE STUDIES AND EVALUATED BY THE HIGH MILITARY COMMAND REGARDING ITS PRACTICALITY AND THE BENEFIT THAT IT WOULD LEND IN EFFORTS AGAINST THE DRUG UNCLASSIFIED

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TRAFFICKERS, AND, ALSO IN ITS NEGATIVE ASPECTS, INASMUCH AS IT COULD BRING ABOUT A DISPLACEMENT OF CONSIDERABLE PROPORTIONS.

15. IN THE GUAJIRA, QTE THERE ARE VERY COMPLEX QUESTIONS TO WHICH IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO STATE OPINIONS SUPERFICIALLY AT AN OFFICIAL LEVEL UNQTE ADDED THE MINISTER.

16. THE OFFICIAL STATED, ALSO, THAT HE WAS PLEASED THAT MR. BENSINGER HAD RECOGNIZED, AS HE HAD ALREADY DONE IN GENEVA, THE GIGANTIC EFFORTS THAT COLOMBIA IS MAKING, AND THAT HE IS PLEASED TO SEE HOW NOW THE UNITED STATES IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CULTIVATIONS, WHICH IT HAD NOT GIVEN MUCH ATTENTION TO LAST YEAR.

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17. GOMEZ ESTRADA MANIFESTED HIS SATISFACTION THAT BENSINGER HAD INDICATED THE FALSEHOOD REGARDING LEGISLATION IN THE UNITED STATES TO LEGALIZE THE USE OF MARIHUANA AND THAT IT ONLY PERTAINS TO A LESSENING OF THE PENALTIES. IT SHOULD BEREMEMBERED THAT, AS PRESIDENT CARTER STATED ON A RECENT OPPORTUNITY, IN HIS COUNTRY THERE EXIST 50 MILLION MARIHUANA SMOKERS AND IN THE CASE OF MASSIVE REPRESSION, THERE WOULD BE NO FACILITIES TO PLACE ALL THOSE LAW BREAKERS.

18. SUB-TITLE: MILITARIZE FLORIDA - ABELARDO-FORERO BENAVIDES WELL-KNOWN PUBLIC SPOKESMAN AND MEMBER OF CONGRESS, STATED, UPON BEING QUESTIONED REGARDING BENSINGER'S IDEA: IT SEEMS TO ME TO BE REALITY: IT IS NECESSARY TO MILITARIZE THE GUAJIRA IN ORDER TO ERADICATE THE BUSINESS. I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY THAT WOULD BE AN INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL MATTERS, AS IT PERTAINS TO A COMMON PROBLEM. THE AMERICANS ARE THE BUYERS AND WE ARE ONLY HERE AS INTERMEDIARIES. CONSEQUENTLY, IT SHOULD ALSO BE PROPOSED UNCLASSIFIED

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THAT THE AMERICANS MILITARIZE THE STATE OF FLORIDA AND ALL ITS COASTS WITH ACCESS TO MARIHUANA. THERE MUST BE RECIPROCITY. IT IS SOMETHING IMMORAL THE FACT THAT THE USERS OF MARIHUANA ACCUSE THOSE WHO CONTRIBUTE TO SUPPLYING IT. QTE THEY ALL COMMIT THE SAME CRIME UNQTE, HE ADDED.

19. ONLY INITIATIVES. WITHIN THE CIRCLES OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE NATION'S OFFICES YESTERDAY IT WAS STATED THAT AT NO TIME DURING THE LAST DRUG CONFERENCE IN LIMA WAS THERE ANY MENTION OF THE MILITARIZATION OF THE GUAJIRA.

20. IT WAS ADDED, THAT SINCE LAST YEAR, WHEN THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE ASSUMED THE DIRECTION OF THE FIGHT AGAINST DRUG TRAFFICKING, DIFFERENT MECHANISMS ARE BEING STUDIED IN ORDER TO ERADICATE THE GIGANTIC PROBLEM, BUT ALL OF THESE CONTINUE UNDER EVALUATION AND STUDY; THAT IT IS TRUE THAT THE DIRECTOR IN COLOMBIA OF THIS CAMPAIGN, RODOLFO GARCIA ORDONEZ, HAS CONTEMPLATED SINCE JUNE OF LAST YEAR THE POSSIBILITY OF MILITARIZING THE GUAJIRA AND THAT THIS INITIATIVE WAS MADE KNOWN TO PRESIDENT LOPEZ MICHELSEN, BUT SINCE THAT TIME THE MATTER HAS NOT BEEN DISCUSSED.

21. IT WAS STATED, ALSO, THAT THE QUESTION OF MILITARIZATION IS
A DELICATE AND COMPLICATED QUESTION, FROM MANY POINTS OF VIEW,
AND IN ORDER FOR IT TO BE CRYSTALIZED, IT WOULD HAVE TO BE
PRECEDED BY AN EVALUATION OF ALL ITS RAMIFICATIONS.
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